



Nachlass Robert Koch

Signatur: as/b1/300

DOI: 10.25646/9219

Transkription: Michael Tietz

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Leonard House, London Road, Bognor. Sussex. England.

17th July 1884

Sir [Robert Koch]

Seeing that you take a scientific interest in cholera I beg most respectfully to inclose you copy of an article I wrote on the Cause and Cure of cholera, which appeared in the Journal of Public "Health" on the 28th July 1876, page 81, & which perhaps may not have been generally brought to notice.

I do not put so much importance to the theory of germs & animalcule generating disease, as I consider that it is the disease that generates them: that the very blood of animals, & the air and earth contains them, and when the blood and air become impure that they then develop themselves & spread into further contagion. I believe, for instance, that the animalcule in the human body as well as of the lower animals develop themselves into tape & other worms etc., from an impure state of blood, altho' they may be also propagated by other means.

Many years ago I recollect that the whole of England, & far out at sea, was densely clouded with miasms or small knots, and how could they have been instantly produced but from a peculiar state of atmosphere which developed them.

A Surgeon Major in the Indian Army was much pleased with my above mentioned article on cholera.

I am Yours faithfully

W. W. Withers

To Dr. Koch

Berlin

Germany.

Anlage: Zeitungsartikel

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CAUSE AND CURE OF ASIATIC CHOLERA.

To the Editor of PUBLIC HEALTH.

SIR,—As I for many years past have had a strong opinion as to the cause and cure of cholera, and as it may be of great importance to scientific medical men, I will, with your permission, state it in your periodical, and should be glad to see any observations on the subject.

My idea is that, from the cause hereafter appearing, during the cholera there is a general deficiency of oxygen in the atmosphere, but still sufficient to support life in a healthy locality. And that in unhealthy localities, for instance, where poisonous malaria and gases are brought out of the earth from excessive heat, and otherwise, they overcome and expel oxygen, there being *no affinity for each other*. And we all know that if we have not sufficient affinity or power in ourselves to absorb it the effects will be precisely as occur in cases of cholera, and the sufferer dies from the blood being unoxxygenised. The same, for instance, as in the Grotto del Cane Cave, the poisonous gases prevail, and it is certain death to enter that place. The same in the poisonous Valley of Jarva, or Vale of Death, bad drains, wells, &c., where the malaria prevails and expels the oxygen. So a person, from various causes, may have a deficiency of oxygen; for instance, from a deficient or disproportionate chest and lungs—constitutional causes, and the body may not have the power or sufficient affinity for oxygen. The

cure would, therefore, be for cholera and diseases of that character to *immediately* administer oxygen and remove the patient from the unhealthy neighbourhood, for it is well-known that those who have been removed to a higher locality escape; for instance, when the cholera was raging at Jersey and Guernsey those who went from those places to the Isle of Sark, a much higher atmosphere, entirely escaped, although there was constant communication from the cholera districts to that island.

The cause of the general deficiency of oxygen in the atmosphere may be readily perceived to be from an over-quantity of malaria occasioned by heat and otherwise, which, particularly in low and unhealthy districts, expels the oxygen, and the malaria may arise from swamps and poisonous grounds even abroad, and swept across the country in clouds, causing the epidemic; for I don't believe that cholera is directly contagious from one person to another; it may probably be indirectly communicated from one person to another, or assist to give the disease, from the patient being in so poisonous a state of body as to be the cause or partial cause, the same as a bad drain, &c.—I am, &c.

W. ✓

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